FINLAND *the* HERMIT NATION *of* EUROPE

People Are Passive and Unfathomable Yet Their Love of Independence Promises Bright Future

THE MARKET SQUARE OF HELSINGFORS

IN 1816 Emperor Alexander I of Russia wrote to Steinheit, then governor general of Finland, in the following terms: "As regards the conditions of Finland, my intention has been to give this people a political existence, so that they may not feel themselves conquered by Russia, but united to her for their own clear advantage; therefore not only their civil but their political laws must be maintained." Today, a century after those words were written, there seems at last good hope that Alexander I's intention may be permanently fulfilled, writes Rosalind Travers Hyndman in New York Sun.

A race of Mongolian origin and language, the "Suomilaiset" or people of the fens—were Christianized very early in the thirteenth century by the Swedes, who treated them on the whole with equality and justice, and intermarried with them freely, not, however, allowing the Finnish language to be written or spoken to any extent. The result was that in 1808 Russia conquered a people who spoke Swedish and regarded themselves as independent Swedes; and although the Finns have passed through enormous national changes in the course of the century, Russians of the ruling classes could never get it our of their heads that Finland desired to belong to Sweden again.

The governors of Russia, having much vaster affairs in hand, did not realize that the remarkable development of Finnish nationalism was directed, first and last, against the Swedish language and Finno-Swedish domination. The Finnish language was spoken only by the remote peasantry and Finnish names even were not legally recognized. Yet, meanwhile, a great movement was steadily growing up for the revival of Finland's own singularly rich and beautiful tongue.

The Finnish people began to think of their country as "Suomi," something utterly distinct from Sweden or Russia, having a language and literature of its own. From 1849 onward, when Lonnrot published the second edition of the "Kalevala," Finland's national epic, educated Finns were beginning to give up Swedish as a means of communication and learning to use the strange, difficult, sonorous language which was their birthright.

Naturally this development soon cleft the country in two. Many Finns urged, not unreasonably, that it was hardly practicable for so small a people to cut themselves off from Scandinavia, from Russia, from the rest of Europe in fact, "by climbing on to a language island" in this way. But nationalism triumphed. In 1863 the "nice little constitution" granted by Alexander II left the Finns free to govern themselves in all internal matters in a fairly representative manner, and from this time the study of Finnish became an integral part of the general education.

The use of the revived language of Finland grew so fast that Swedish-speaking Finns began to find themselves in a minority, and in 1894 after a very hot debate the Finnish language was placed on an equality with Swedish in the Finland senate. "Svekoman" (Swede-Finn) and "Fennoman" (Finnish-Finn) became cries of warfare, and the language conflict fell roughly into line with the divisions of class. The progressive and proletarian elements in the country were Fennoman, while the middle class, conservative and aristocratic forces were for a long while by speech and traditions Swede.

All this time the Finns as a people and as a nation kept strictly to that policy of detachment and independence which has always marked them. They took no part at all in Russian affairs and showed little interest in those of Scandinavia; they appeared to Europe generally as self-centered as a Chinese colony in the West might be.

Finland meant to work out her salvation alone. In literature and art indeed the country was open to European influences, for the Finns have always been great travelers, wandering about the continent with cold, appraising eyes, selecting and taking back with them such ideas as they considered likely to be of use. They took political ideas also from Scandinavia and from Germany, but they had no desire to make propaganda for their own ideas or their own race.

Yet inevitably they were bound to be a growing trouble to the Russian government and a stumbling block to Pan-Slav policy. Obviously a democratic and almost self-governing province was out of place among the folds of the vast autocratic rule which covered all the Russias then.

But a far more important objection was this: The duchy of Finland, alien in language, character and administration, was a complete break in that scheme of one vast homogeneous Russia, stretching from the Norwegian coast to the Pacific, one in language, laws, religion and government—that dream of giant unity and monotony which seems to have filled the minds of the directors of Russia for 30 years and more. There seems little doubt that the deposed dynasty cherished this design as the Hohenzollerns did that of "Mittel-Europa." It was a similar huge, dull, magnificent, mischievous idea, trampling even more widely over the rights of other nations and intended to produce an even more dismal uniformity of rule.

So, dispassionately viewed—and the Finn, even when considering his own misfortunes, is eminently dispassionate—Russia's first attack upon the liberties of Finland in 1899 was inevitable, a catastrophe of nature. There is little need to recall "the bad years" from 1899 to 1906, when the Finnish constitution was suspended and the country was placed under the rule of a military dictator, General Bobrikoff. They form a monotonous record of press censorship, dismissals of native officials, illegal arrests and exile.

The great strike of 1905-1906, however successful in its main objects, achieved two things: The election of the Russian duma and the temporary restoration of Finland's constitution. Yet "restored" is hardly the word, for that restricted, cautious and eminently bourgeois constitution of 1863 was resurrected into something democratic and terrible—a popular government, based upon full adult suffrage and proportional representation with an elected house, containing at its first assemblage in April, 1907, 80 social democrats out of a total of 200. And these were genuine, uncompromising Marxist social democrats, the outcome of a party which was first formed in 1899. Since then the social democratic representation of Finland has steadily increased at every election.

From the spring of 1907 to that of 1909 Finland experienced "two crowded years of glorious life" in which the country simply hummed with internal progress and political development. The old feuds of Svekoman and Fennoman were taken up with renewed vigor, although the Swedish speaking Finns were now only one-ninth of the population and still decreasing.

We all remember how, in May, 1910, 120 members of the British parliament signed a memorial to the duma expressing the apprehension with which they regarded the proposal to deprive Finland of her constitutional rights, while a large number of German, French, Italian, Belgian and Dutch deputies formed and addressed similar memorials. But all this was in vain, and by July, 1910, the bill for the Russification of Finland became law.

It was not immediately and violently put into practice. The landtdag was still assembled at intervals, though it had rather less power than a municipal council. A number of official dimissals took place, Russians were given full Finnish rights in Finland and the usual series of arrests, imprisonments and exilings followed, but until 1912 the Finnish press was only intermittently censored. However, this second series of "bad years" was much harder for the Finns than the period of 1899-1906.

Soon after the war began Finland was practically cut off from the civilized world. Russification set in with full force and the most stringent censorship of the press, of correspondence and of all written matter whatever was established. Even the internal business of the country suffered greatly, and the whole people were put "under hatches," as it were, and assuredly on very short rations for an unlimited time.

One piece of news only came through in the early days of the war, to the effect that the dowager empress of Russia had returned from Denmark by way of Finland and had shown much courtesy and common sense on her passage. It was said that she had caused her personal guard to be greatly relaxed, that she had talked with Finns everywhere and had taken pains to create a good impression. But shortly after her return the Finns were specially and officially warned "not to build any false hopes of restored liberty" upon the friendly demeanor of the dowager empress.

Naturally this ill-advised policy has had very bad results. At the beginning of the war many Finns were in favor of the allies, chiefly by reason of their English trade connections and English sympathies. But when Russia's most powerful and necessary ally forbode to say one word in favor of a reasonable treatment of Finland, and when the English press by its undiscriminating praise of all things Russian actually gave more strength to the powers of reaction, then the Finns cannot be blamed for looking elsewhere.

Their exiles flocked to Germany in great numbers, and it is said that more than 3,000 Finns took up their residence there. The Germans are further credited with making active propaganda for their cause among the professors and students of Finland, but it seems doubtful whether they would really have found it worth while, when the allies themselves were unconsciously doing so much to spread pro-German sympathies there. If —but no one can say more than if—Finland was occasionally used as a channel for communication between Germany and the traitorous party in Russia the allies have only themselves to blame.

However this may be, it seems pretty clear that there were several German agencies in more than one part of Finland trying to stir the people up to an armed revolt.

Since our reactionary press at one time took upon itself to repeat the venerable and discredited cliches about Finland's desire for independence or for union with Sweden, it is well to say once more that Finland's great nationalist movement was all directed against Swedish influence, and that there are not five wiseacres in the whole country who would dream of the possibility of such a union. Nor has the fiercest advocate of Finnish freedom ever contemplated absolute independence. The position of the country and its very small population wholly forbid it.

Surely this tiny nation has a magnificent future! It may even be possible for them, highly trained and politically qualified as they are, to hurry through the intervening stages of their economic development and show to Europe the working model of a co-operative commonwealth. They are in the main Mongolians, patient, passive, secret and unfathomable, and their kinsmen in Japan and China have done equally marvelous things.

Yet alien from us as they are racially, their development is so western that no Englishman who has spent much time in Finland has any sense of a race barrier. On the contrary, they seem, once known, curiously appealing and sympathetic, this brave, ugly little people, with their high cheekbones, great foreheads and deep-set eyes.

Their literature, like their landscape, is extraordinarily varied and beautiful and there runs through it a sense of the timeless forests and the unbounded North. It haunts you; no one who has felt the charm of Finland is really content till he sees the Land of Thousand Lakes again.

PAPER FAMINE IN OLD TIMES.

There was a paper famine in Europe in the seventh century. In A. D. 640 the Saracens conquered Egypt, and at the same time, by order of Omar, their caliph, the renowned library at Alexandria, consisting of 400,000 volumes, was burned. The paper supply of the then world was derived from the papyrus bark, a reed which grew only in Egypt. Consequently, when the Saracens gained possession of the country the paper supply was cut off. This led to the adoption of a curious expedient. The writing on used papyrus paper was erased and the paper, which was thus made available, again brought into use. An old author has suggested that probably owing to this many valuable contributions from classic writers, Tacitus, Livy and others, were lost to the world.

FAMOUS BRITISH REGIMENT.

The Coldstream guards is a regiment of footguards in the British army forming part of the royal household brigade. It is one of the oldest regiments of the British service, dating from 1659. In that year General Monk, who, after the death of Cromwell, took sides with the parliament and the army, organized the regiment at Coldstream, a border town of Berwickshire, Scotland, whence the name of the regiment, and marched with it into England. It has seen service in every British campaign of any magnitude, and has emblazoned on its regimental colors the names of many of the most brilliant victories of British arms.

SLOW PROGRESS.

"You have been trying to deceive me for years, Henry."

"Oh, come now, my dear."

"It is said practice makes perfect."

"What has that to do with me?"

"I was just thinking that you don't succeed any better now than you did when we were first married."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

ICE AS A SWEETMEAT.

We Americans eat more ice cream and similar frozen desserts than the people of any other nation, but the Japanese have us beaten as eaters of ice. According to the Tokyo Advertiser, one of their favorite dishes is small cakes of ice broken into tiny pebbly pieces and eaten with sugar and lemon, or any other mixture that they may fancy. The commonest way of eating ice in Japan, however, is to shave it into snowy flakes and to swallow it with sweetened water into which various appetizers, such as fruit juice or sweetmeats, have been thrown.

Ice cream, milk and eggs shaken with ice and other kinds of cooling beverages are sold in an ever-increasing quantity, but the old style of eating "raw" ice, in what the Japanese call the korimizu fashion, is still in the greatest vogue.—Youth's Companion.

TATTOOING ANCIENT CUSTOM.

The antiquity of tattooing is evidenced by its almost universal employment among primitive peoples. In New Guinea the young women are tattooed all over their bodies, their faces being similarly treated after marriage.

In the Solomon islands a girl is not eligible for marriage unless she has been tattooed. The girls of Borneo are thus adorned from waist to knees in most elaborate fashion; likewise their hands, feet and ankles.

In Burmah, under the last king, every male was required by royal edict to be tattooed from waist to knees; and it was customary for the girls to have their tongues tattooed with charms to attract the men.

SUCH AN INQUISITIVE WOMAN.

Hub—Who is that letter from?

Wife—What do you want to know for?

Hub—There you go! "What do I want to know for?" I declare if you aren't the most inquisitive woman I ever met.—Boston Transcript.

CONFIDENCE MEN ROB EVANGELIST

Frederick Seibert, Assistant to Billy Sunday, Is Victim of "Con" Artists.

WAS GIVEN WARNING

As an Expression of Trust Religious Man Gave Slicker $500 and Watch and Chain Valued at $350.

Chicago.—The "school" for confidence men has turned out a new prodigy whose latest victim is Frederick Seibert, evangelist and Billy Sunday assistant, who trusted him with $550 and a watch after the slicker offered to finance a tour of the South.

The master confidence man is operating under the name of C. Harcourt and poses as a wealthy sheepraiser from Sydney, Australia. Fred A. Salaman, a wealthy English timber expert from London, a guest at the Blackstone hotel, was the first victim of Harcourt and his aids, who obtained $240 from him.

Detective Sergeants Edward Baynes and George Lynch of the detective bureau, who were put on the Salaman case, learned of Seibert's presence in Chicago as the next probable victim and warned him, but this failed to save the religious worker.

Hearing from the hotel clerk that Mr. Seibert had called for Harcourt, the detectives suspected him as one of the gang, but he convinced them that he was an evangelist here to raise funds and have some hymn books and sheet music of revival songs printed. He gave his address as the office of the Homer Rodeheaver Publishing company, 440 South Dearborn street, of which "Billy" Sunday's song leader is the president.

Offered Evangelist $5,000.

Seibert, who is from Marshalltown, Ia., said he met Harcourt in a shoe shining shop and the latter offered him $5,000 as an aid in building his tabernacle.

Mr. "Harcourt" introduced the evangelist to a "friend," whose uncle, he confided to Mr. Seibert, had just died in Australia, leaving him $700,000.

"That tabernacle's a great thing," said the friend. "Believe me, religion is great. I've a notion to put $10,000 into your tabernacle.

Then he grew confidential. Leaning over, he said:

"Now, since I'm going to trust you with my $10,000, I wonder how far you'd trust me?"

"Trust you? With anything," said Mr. Seibert.

"How much money have you got?" asked the stranger.

Mr. Seibert counted it out—$550.

A Matter of Trust.

"You wouldn't trust me to carry $500 of it around the block?"

The $500 went into the stranger's outstretched hand. He waited a minute.

"The watch and chain," he asked. "Would you trust me with them, too?"

Mr. Seibert Counted It Out—$550.

The tail went with the hide. With $500, $350 watch and the chain with the gold piece on it, the sallow man turned away.

"We'll see," he said. "We'll see if you trust me!"

Mr. Seibert was still waiting for the Australian philanthropist to return when the cafeteria which was to be the meeting place closed.

Canadian Money "Exchanged."

Mr. Salaman, a guest at the Blackstone hotel, was in the reading room when a stranger nearby, reading a paper, introduced himself as C. Harcourt of Sydney, saying he had just sold his sheep ranch for $500,000. More talk followed and the two men went to the bar, where Harcourt paid for the drinks with a $100 bill. He said he also was a guest at the hotel and confided that he expected to meet his son Rutherford and his daughter Minnie there the next day.

The trimming was effected by offering to "exchange" American for Canadian money. Salaman says he remembered later that Harcourt's countenance changed when he told him that he had only $240 in Canadian money. The money was turned over to Harcourt, who did not return.

PERSIAN GUN CENTURIES OLD

Prize of War When the British Captured Bagdad Is Now on Exhibition at London.

Rajim-I-Jan-Rumiyya is inscribed on the old Persian gun which, at the request of King George V., now stands on the Horse Guards parade in London for inspection by the public, says Christian Science Monitor. It was captured by the British on their entry into Bagdad, and was sent by Sir Stanley Maude and the British expeditionary force under his command as a gift to the king. The gun dates from the year 1547, and was built by the Shah of Persia, Ismail II, to wage war with against the Turks, who were giving support to his rebellious brother. Part of the gun's inscription states that "The Commander of Victory and Help, the Shah, desiring to blot out all trace of the Turks, ordered Dgiev to make this Gun." The inscription goes on to describe the capacity of the gun for "spitting out fire like a dragon." Rajim-I-Jan-Rumiyya is a chronogram for the year of the Hegira 954, which is A. D. 1547, the date the gun was made for war against the Turk.

Not Quite Sure.

Ruth told something that sounded incredible to her grandmother.

"Now, dear, is that the truth?" grandmother questioned.

"Sure," was the response, "it is, or else I dreamed it, but I don't remember which."